



The Labor Market for Entry-Level Workers

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Executive Summary

This report describes the employment process and the knowledge and skills that are necessary to obtain, retain and advance from entry-level jobs in growth sectors of San Francisco's economy. Entry level is defined as a job that requires only a high school education and less than one year of work experience. Information for this report was obtained in a process that used survey responses from employers in San Francisco to help identify potential new job opportunities, clarify the nature of the jobs created, and identify the skills required by employers.

The survey process was more than data collection, however. It was also a means for establishing lasting contacts between San Francisco firms and the Department of Human Services. By establishing on-going, permanent relationships with employers, DHS can better monitor requirements for new job opportunities for welfare recipients. Relationships with a single employer provide DHS job developers with information on employment nuances in each firm and build contacts with human resource personnel and line supervisors so that the information flow can continue. Aggregating data across firms and describing the general employment processes provides DHS with information that can be used to develop programs and policies that trouble shoot against employment problems that low-skill workers may face. In other words, the survey process allows job developers to learn first hand what it takes for their clients to obtain, retain, and advance from entry-level jobs in San Francisco firms.

The labor market information from the surveys provides several important insights into the employment prospects that face entry-level workers. Administrative support occupations (including clerical) are about two-thirds of all the entry-level (only high school education and less than one year of work experience required) job listings in the 29 firms contacted. Administrative support positions can be found in all industries with especially strong growth in the temporary services sector. The temporary services and government sectors hold promise for employment for low-skill workers, particularly if the client has little education and work experience. Although the government sector pays higher wages than the temporary service sector, temporary services has strong growth and is a source of employment for labor market entrants with little education and work experience. As such, many entry-level workers must begin in temporary work if they are to move from welfare to work.

In the large firms that we surveyed, workers for entry-level jobs are recruited using a variety of methods. For employment in these firms, low-skill workers should be aggressive in their job



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search but realize that they face relatively stringent barriers in obtaining entry-level employment. The successful applicant must generally have education and work experience that far exceeds the levels posted and often must pass tests for drugs, mental and physical abilities and possess work-ready "soft" skills. In a nutshell, workers entering the labor market are moving into a market with many employment opportunities but high standards for employment.

At the large San Francisco firms, the successful job applicant will receive wages between 10 and 15 dollars an hour and fringe benefits, once the employee meets the necessary hours and wait period for benefit accrual. Welfare recipients may face work difficulties imposed by childcare, however. Few jobs offer childcare assistance and none offer paid childcare. Most of the jobs afford flexible hours and some allow job sharing, which may help bridge employment and childcare responsibilities. Thus, clients with children face a market in which full-time wages may not support childcare, part-time employment may not meet employment requirements for benefits, and benefits may not include childcare expenses.

Workers who are successful in entry-level positions possess the "soft" workplace readiness and communication skills, including writing. While few of the "harder" skills are necessary for success at that level, the skill requirements get "harder" as the employee moves up the promotion ladder. This suggests that if low-skill workers enter the labor market without the "harder" skills or the capability of acquiring the "harder" skills, positions beyond entry level will be unattainable.

DHS can use this labor market information in several ways. For example, with this information job developers can better match clients to training that provides the knowledge and skills necessary to obtain, retain employment, and advance from available entry-level positions. Program developers can design programs that will fill the knowledge and skill gaps that TANF recipients have and policy makers can develop policies that are consistent with the needs of TANF recipients, low-skill workers, and San Francisco employers.

Expanding data collection through project continuation will help entry-level workers move into the labor market by 1) maintaining and expanding the relationships that were begun; 2) tracking and monitoring labor market processes, employment trends, and knowledge and skill requirements in entry-level positions; 3) providing the information necessary to produce specific industrial and occupational reports; and 4) validating the inferences that are drawn from a small sample.

Introduction

The *Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996* dramatically altered social welfare policy in the United States. Perhaps most fundamentally, this legislation devolved program administration and funding to the states while requiring all capable individuals to move from welfare to work as rapidly as possible. The goal is to move families toward self-sufficiency. The *California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids Program (CalWorks)* amends the California laws to address federal welfare reform requirements. Each county in California assumes responsibility for implementing the provisions of the state plan for moving recipients from welfare to work. In general, there is a lifetime limit of 60 months of support from the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) provisions and current welfare recipients will be required to work within 24 months of implementation of CalWorks (18 months after benefits begin for new recipients). CalWorks requires that recipients must now work 26 hours per week and 32 hours per week by July, 1999. It also establishes minimum requirements for the number of individuals who leave welfare as a result of being employed.

These legislative changes increase the gains that San Francisco receives from moving low-skill workers, including TANF recipients, permanently into the labor market. For this movement to occur, however, individuals must have the knowledge and skills that employers in the City demand in their workers. Unless low-skill workers have the necessary skills, they will not be able to obtain and keep a job, which precludes their ability to achieve economic self-sufficiency.

City planners, economic developers, counselors, case workers, CBOs and job developers must therefore focus employment and training efforts around building the knowledge and skills that employers need so that if TANF recipients and low-skill workers can move with ease into job openings within the City. If these efforts are successful, all parties will benefit. Low-skill workers will gain employment, former welfare recipients will gain self-sufficiency, San Francisco Employers will gain qualified workers, and the City will continue to grow and prosper.

Building appropriate knowledge and skills for entering workers first requires identifying those skills that employers need in entry-level positions. Too often welfare recipients enter the labor market without the knowledge and skills that employer's demand. Without the appropriate set of skills that employers need, employment will not be obtained. At a minimum, welfare recipients must meet the minimum qualifications for the position, including the posted requirements for education and work experience. Meeting the posted requirements is not sufficient to gain

employment, however. Job entrants must pass employment barriers such as drug tests, work history requirements, license requirements, etc. Perhaps the subtlest barriers that must be overcome for employment are the unstated education and work experience requirements and the “soft” skills that must be held by the successful job applicant.

Job postings merely state minimum requirements. Successful applicants often must have characteristics that far exceed those stated. Program and job developers at DHS therefore must be able to steer low-skill workers toward fulfilling the unstated job requirements as manifested by characteristics of incumbents.

Of course, obtaining the entry-level job is merely one step along the road to self sufficiency. The next steps include meeting job performance expectations and climbing promotion ladders. Thus, achieving economic self-sufficiency requires TANF recipients (and other low-skill individuals) to enter the labor market armed with the necessary knowledge and skills—as defined by employers—to obtain, sustain, and advance in employment opportunities. For this to occur, we must know the employment requirements for hiring, successful performance evaluation, and promotion. Unfortunately, systematic information of this type does not exist.

This project fills this information void and assists DHS in their efforts to define current employer needs in projected entry-level job opportunities. This project used survey responses from employers in San Francisco to help identify new entry-level job opportunities, clarify the nature of the jobs created, and identify the skills sets required by employers for these positions. Entry level is defined as a job that requires only a high school education and less than one year of work experience. (Appendix I provides a detailed description of the process). The survey process was more than data collection, however. It was also a means for establishing lasting contacts between San Francisco firms and DHS. By establishing on-going, permanent relationships with employers, DHS can better monitor requirements for new job opportunities for welfare recipients.

The surveys were designed to gather specific information about the knowledge and skills that applicants needed to meet the minimum job requirements, to meet the qualifications held by the successful applicants, to succeed once employed in the job, and to advance into the next higher position. Information also was obtained about recruitment methods and benefits from employment in each firm. This information provides invaluable insights into the hiring and

employment barriers that might prohibit TANF recipients from achieving long-term self-sufficiency and other low-skill workers from gaining employment.

The survey process was a partnership between survey researchers and the DHS job developers. Survey researchers made all initial phone contacts with employers and the job developers accompanied them on the on-site interviews of human resource specialists and line supervisors. By having job developers accompany survey researchers in their fieldwork, DHS personnel learned first hand about the knowledge and skills required for employment, the hiring processes, and the methods and recruitment that their clients will face. By meeting face-to-face with human resource specialists and supervisors of the entry-level workers under the guise of survey research, job developers had a structured meeting for questioning employers about their needs and for informing employers about DHS clients. It also established an information flow such that contacts were established and relationships were built. A job developer now can more freely contact employers because a personal relationship has been established and a name can be placed with the face.

This report, and the process that was used to collect the data, represents a shift in the type of support that DHS provides to TANF recipients and low-skill workers. By building and maintaining a data base on the requirements for jobs with expected openings and by building and sustaining personal relationships with employers, DHS policymakers, program officers, and job developers learn of the requirements necessary to obtain, keep, and advance in jobs. By drawing on this information, DHS can better develop policies and programs for and offer wise counsel so TANF recipients can successfully and permanently transition from welfare to work.

Report Outline

This report examines the employment process and entry-level jobs in San Francisco. We first examine the relationship-building that occurred between job developers at DHS and San Francisco employers and then report the information obtained from surveying employers. The report describes general outcomes in four sections.

- I. *A summary of the relationship building.* This section focuses on outcomes from the survey process for the job developers. This information was collected in a focus group that the survey researchers held with DHS personnel. The focus of the meeting was to elicit both positive and negative feedback from job developers on the survey process.
- II. *A description of the labor market for entry-level jobs* with projected openings in the next year.

- III. *Potential uses of the information.* This section outlines how DHS personnel can use the information that has been generated.
- IV. *Summary, conclusions, and recommendations.* This section summarizes and draws overarching conclusions from the report and makes recommendations for future work.

A somewhat separate section of the report describes the labor market for entry-level positions in Administrative Support occupations. Jobs in this field were the most frequently cited by employers as becoming available in the next year. In fact, two-thirds of all of the jobs listed as available were in administrative support (including clerical) with an average of 107 openings for each position (see Table 1).

Table 1: Entry-Level Jobs in "Growth" Industries

<i>Occupation</i>	<i>Average # of Openings per Job</i>	<i>Percent of all Jobs Listed</i>	<i>Industries in which Jobs are Located (and Percent of Jobs Listed in that Industry)</i>
Administrative support, including clerical	107	62.6	Temporary Agencies (88.9%) Health and Education Services (78.6%) Finance, Insurance, & Real Estate (80.0%) Retail (47.7%) Government (45.5%) Transportation, Communication, & Public Utilities (44.4%) Business Services, NEC (20.0%) ¹
Service, not protective or household	16	11.3	Government (27.2%) Business Services, NEC (20.0%) Health and Education Services (14.3%) Transportation, Communication, & Public Utilities (11.1%) Retail (9.5%)
Sales occupations	30	9.3	Retail (33.3%) Finance, Insurance, & Real Estate (20.0%) Temporary Agencies (11.1%)
Operatives ² and laborers	208	7.5	Government (27.3%) Transportation, Communication, & Public Utilities (22.2%) Retail (9.5%)
Protective service	156	5.6	Business Services, NEC (60.0%)
Technicians	46	1.9	Health and Education Services (7.1%)
Precision Production & Craft workers	13	0.9	Transportation, Communication, & Public Utilities (22.2%)

Based on 107 Jobs

Notes: An entry-level job is one that requires no more than high school level education and less than one year of work experience.

¹ NEC is not elsewhere classified.

² Occupations in the operative category include those in which workers are required to operate machinery (e.g., printing presses or transit vehicles).

Because administrative support occupations represents a strong source of job openings in the next year, its employment processes and requirements represent those most typically faced by entry-level workers. For clients who are interested in entering administrative support positions, this information is particularly significant because job developers can focus job search behavior and knowledge and skill development in areas that are necessary to obtain, succeed in, and advance from entry-level jobs in administrative support.

Relationship Building

During the survey process, university researchers, and DHS staff worked as a team. Researchers initially determined the sectors that were most likely to experience employment growth in San Francisco.³ Then researchers met with DHS staff to select specific firms to be surveyed and contacted these firms to determine the entry-level jobs with projected openings in the next year. After those initial contacts, researchers met again with DHS personnel to inspect the specific occupations within firms that would be targeted for in-depth surveying. Once the specific occupations had been chosen, survey researchers and DHS job developers visited the firms together to survey human resource specialists and line supervisors for detailed information about the employment process and requirements. The survey process built relationships in several ways. It established a dialogue between DHS personnel and the survey researchers so that each group could better understand the needs and capabilities of the other. DHS staff could refine their understanding of the labor market that low-skill workers will face and researchers could better understand the way in which DHS works with its client population. The process also allowed job developers to form relationships with the employers being surveyed which they can build on over time to update the survey information and to raise the visibility of DHS as a potential source of employees.

Survey researchers held a focus group meeting with DHS personnel to determine what they gained from the process and what improvements they would suggest for the survey process. (See Appendix II for a summary and transcript of the focus group session.) Job developers from DHS who accompanied survey researchers on the interviews were core participants. Comments made in the focus group indicate that job developers were extremely pleased with the survey process and the information gained from it. In this setting job developers learned:

³ Potepan, Michael. 1998. Economic Expansion in San Francisco in the 1990's, report submitted to DHS. San Francisco: SFSU, The Urban Institute.

- Contacts in firms could provide them with specific information about hiring and job requirements.
- Many firms, especially those with multiple sites, use different employment procedures at different sites. Job developers thought that, in such cases, multiple contacts with firms would be desirable.
- Different perspectives on employment requirements exist within the same firm. Human resource personnel, who recruit and hire, often have different criteria for employment than do line supervisors, who oversee the workers once they are hired.
- Relationships and contacts could be maintained, built upon, and used after the survey process was complete.
- Using the survey researchers provided a “cover” for DHS job developers to gain a period of formal questioning of employers.
- Firms usually have clear expectations and specific hiring requirements.
- Job developers can learn where and what the entry-level jobs were.
- Job developers can learn the type of questions to ask employers in order to help their clients.
- Job developers can learn what it takes for their clients to advance beyond entry-level positions.

In sum, job developers built contacts and relationships with human resource specialists and supervisors within specific firms and learned first hand what it takes for their clients to obtain, retain, and advance from entry-level jobs in San Francisco firms.

The Labor Market that Faces Low-Skill Workers

The survey process proceeded in two stages. In the first stage, researchers obtained a brief description of each entry-level job with projected openings. Since firms contacted for this information were in sectors of the San Francisco economy that were projected to grow, these jobs should provide significant employment opportunities within the next year.

In stage two, researchers asked human resource specialists and line supervisors of the entry-level jobs more in-depth questions about specific jobs that were identified in the first stage. The

questions for the human resource specialists were designed to elicit information about the hiring process and about the level of knowledge and skills required for employment. Since minimum requirements are not always sufficient to ensure employment, the survey questions also elicited information about the *average* level of knowledge and skills of those who were hired.

Survey questions for the line supervisor were designed to elicit information about the knowledge and skills needed for workers to stay employed and be successful in their entry-level position and the knowledge and skills needed to move to the next higher position. Taken together, questions on the two questionnaires were designed to give us a realistic portrait of the knowledge and skills necessary to obtain, maintain, *and* advance beyond entry-level employment.

Information from the two questionnaires is described in four sections: occupations with projected openings, entrance into entry-level occupations, outcomes of entry-level employment, and knowledge and skill requirements.

Occupations with Projected Openings

A total of 29 firms provided information about entry-level jobs with projected openings in the next year (Table 1). As previously noted, nearly two-thirds of the jobs listed were in the field of administrative support (including clerical). All industries with entry-level jobs expected to hire workers in this area with an average of 107 openings in each job listed. Thus, this occupational field potentially represents a primary source of employment for low-skill workers. However, a large portion of these job openings may be in temporary jobs since eighty-nine percent of the openings are in temporary services located in this field.

General service jobs were the next most frequently cited area of employment growth. Occupations that typify this field included, food counter occupations, janitors, attendants, childcare workers, and grounds keepers.

Technician occupations, while highly touted as a field with high-paying jobs requiring relatively little training, show little promise for workers with only a high school education. Less than two percent of the jobs were in technical position, with an average of only about 46 openings per job. Sales positions are also not high volume positions.

Protective service and operatives/laborers (miscellaneous printing operators, truck drivers, production helpers, freight movers, and labors except construction) are both areas in which a

relatively large percentage of job listings combine with a large number of openings per listing. However, jobs in these areas often employ a relatively low percentage of female workers, especially when compared to jobs in administrative support.

Table 2 shows the characteristics of entry-level jobs in each industry that was targeted for surveying. Key findings include:

- Firms in the multimedia industry are not projected to hire entry-level workers.
- Even when different industries use the same job titles, employment requirements and salary level often vary greatly.
- Large growth exists in temporary services.
- The government sector of the economy is also experiencing strong employment growth at the entry level and pays relatively high wages for entry-level workers.
- Jobs in the government and temporary service sectors have the lowest educational and work experience requirements.
- Business services, *except multimedia*, also has strong employment growth at the entry level.
- Jobs in business services, *except temporary services*, have higher educational and work experience requirements than those in government and are not heavily occupied by females.

Table 2: Characteristics of Entry-Level Jobs in Growth Sectors

Industry	Percent Requiring less than High School	Percent Requiring No Experience	Percent Requiring Specific Skills	Average Percent Female in Job	Average Starting Pay in Job	Average # of Projected Openings per Job
Business Services (8 firms)	0.0	20.0	0.0	28.9	8.45	119
Multimedia (3 firms)	<i>Not Hiring Entry-Level Positions</i>					
Temporary Agencies (2 firms)	44.4	55.6	0.0	67.8	7.19	416
Finance, Insurance, & Real Estate (4 firms)	too few firms reporting			15.0	8.85	30
Health and Education Services (5 firms)	17.9	10.7	3.6	57.5	11.83	65
Retail (6 firms)	52.6	38.9	0.0	51.7	6.25	30
Transp., Comm., & Public Utilities (3 firms)	22.2	0.0	33.3	31.8	13.29	78
Government (2 firms)	45.5	36.4	27.3	51.3	12.86	132
<i>Total</i>	28.6	22.9	7.3	50.4	9.93	95
Based on 107 jobs						

Notes: An entry-level job is one that requires no more than high school level education and less than one year of work experience. Firms "Not Elsewhere Classified" are not included because of insufficient sample size. Three firms in finance, insurance, and real estate; two firms in multimedia (business services); and one firm in health services could not be reached to complete the survey on entry-level occupation hiring. Numbers are averages (percent females and starting pay) or medians (minimum education and work experience). If a pay range is reported, the low end of the range is stated.

In sum, administrative support occupations (including clerical) comprise about two-thirds of all the entry-level job listings in the 29 firms contacted. Employment growth in this field spans all industrial sectors with especially strong growth in the temporary services sector of the economy. In fact, the temporary services and government sectors hold the most promise for entry-level employment opportunities for low-skill workers. Although the government sector pays higher wages, workers entering the labor market cannot ignore temporary work if they are to move successfully into work. It has strong growth and is a source of employment for labor market entrants with little education and work experience.

Entrance into Entry-Level Occupations

We interviewed 16 human resource specialists to determine what it takes to obtain an entry-level job. Survey questions were designed to elicit information on the methods used to recruit job applicants, requirements necessary to obtain entry-level employment, and characteristics of the "ideal" employee. This information provides insights into the job search methods that clients should use and requirements that are often not contained in the job posting.

Table 3 shows that no one predominant recruiting method exists. Because the most frequently cited methods are internal recruiting processes (job bulletins and hiring from within), workers entering the labor market might be advised to approach firms with an application instead of waiting for postings. In fact, 75 percent of the firms use walk-ins and referrals as a means of filling positions. This aggressive job search behavior might also be used to follow up on the application once it has been made. As one job developer noted in the focus group meeting, there are too many entry-level applications to track without applicant persistence. This is not to say that workers entering the workforce should ignore the traditional job search methods. Rather, a variety of methods should be used including "cold calling".

Table 3: Recruitment Methods

Percent of Firms using the Following to Recruit for Jobs	
Job bulletins	75.0
Referrals/Walk-ins	75.0
Hiring from within	68.8
State employment service	62.5
Phone job line	62.5
Verbal networking	56.3
Web posting	50.0
Job fairs	50.0
Newspaper	43.8
Schools and colleges	43.8
Television or radio	35.7
Staffing/Temporary services	6.3
Based on 16 jobs	

Notes: An entry-level job is one that requires no more than high school level education and less than one year of work experience. Information is from the Human Resource department of the firm.

low-skill workers should be prepared to face relatively high employment screens, as Table 4 shows.⁴ Of the entry-level jobs described, we found that:

The successful applicant must understand English "very well" in 61.5 percent of the jobs.

Applicants who lack a work history, or who have a history of substance abuse or mental problems or a criminal record are less likely to be hired in over one-third of the positions.

Drug tests, medical examinations, fingerprinting, and physical and mental ability tests are required to fill one-third to one-half of the jobs.

Many jobs have minimum age, language, or license requirements.

Almost 70 percent of the employers required references.

Table 4: Characteristics Necessary to be Hired in Entry-Level Jobs

Percent saying that:		Does the Company Require the Following before Employment can Begin:	
<i>Employees need to:</i>		Drug test?	37.5
Speak English very well?	30.8	Medical exam?	37.5
Understand English very well?	61.5	Fingerprinting?	50.0
		Credit check?	18.8
<i>The hiring decision depends "very much" on:</i>		U.S. Citizenship?	68.8
Criminal record	42.9	No felonies?	46.2
History of substance abuse or mental problems	38.5	References?	68.8
No recent work history	31.3	Drivers license?	37.5
Long period of unemployment	18.8	Language other than English?	31.3
Only short term job experience	6.3	Minimum age?	75.0
		Certification or license?	25.0
		Test?	56.3
		Physical ability?	43.7

Based on 16 jobs

Notes: An entry-level job is one that requires no more than high school level education and less than one year of work experience. Information is from the Human Resource department of the firm. Three human resource specialists (out of 16) declined to answer questions about hiring and criminal records and history of substance abuse.

We should keep in mind that firms in our sample are very large. This statement may not hold for smaller firms.

Reference letters may help a firm evaluate the “softer” skills held by the job applicant. As Table 5 shows, the open-ended descriptions of the “ideal” employee, as described by a human resource specialist, often includes characteristics that many might consider to be “givens” in workers (as one job developer stated). This includes dependability, reliability, friendliness, and an appropriate attitude. Because these characteristics are cited as qualities in “ideal” employees, human resource specialists probably encounter employment problems in these basic workplace readiness skills. While it is easy to state that programs must be developed and counsel must be given to welfare recipients so that they enter the labor market prepared to “fit into” the culture of work, it is difficult to alter behavior along these lines. Nonetheless, “soft skills” and behavioral issues must be addressed because most human resource specialists describe their ideal employee primarily in terms of their behavioral characteristics and their “soft skills”.

Table 5: Description of Ideal Employee: The Human Resource Viewpoint

Describe your Ideal Employee (Frequency)	
Dependable or reliable	7
Friendly or personal skills	6
Attitude	4
Meets education or experience qualifications	4
Flexibility	3
Follows rules or supervisor	3
Communication skills	3
Hygiene/appearance	2
Trainable	2
Customer service	2
Initiative/motivation	2
Dedication/want to work	2
Honesty/integrity	2
Problem solving	1
Based on Responses by 15 Human Resource Specialists	

Notes: Information is from the Human Resource department of the firm. One human resource specialist did not describe the ideal employee.

Outcomes of Entry-Level Employment

Human resource specialists were also asked about the characteristics of incumbent employees in entry-level positions and about the characteristics of their jobs (Tables 6 and 7). Examination of their responses provides interesting insights into the outcomes from a successful job applicant. Specifically, we see that:

- There is often a big discrepancy between the posted education and work requirements and the education and work skills of successful applicants. Between one-half and two-thirds of the jobs do not require high school graduation or work experience. However, *in no firms did successful applicants have less than high school graduation or zero work experience. In fact, in nearly half of the firms the successful applicants had some college.*
- If job applicants are hired, employment outcomes are relatively good. Nearly three-quarters of the workers are full time and about one-fourth are promoted within two years. The average wage is \$10.24 and about one-third make at least \$15 within two years. About two-thirds of these jobs have unions representing the workers and over half provide in-service training.
- Hiring conditions are good for qualified candidates. The majority of firms increased hiring over past years with over 100 jobs expected to be open in each position. Over half of the human resource specialists say that it is difficult to find qualified candidates.

Table 6: Characteristics of Entry-Level Jobs

Job Requirements and Worker Attributes		Pay	
<i>Education</i>		Average hourly wage	10.24
Percent not requiring high school graduation	56.3	Percent making \$15 in 1.5-2 years	33.3
Percent having less than high school graduation	0.0	Percent making \$10 within a year	86.7
Percent having at least some college	46.4		
<i>Work Experience</i>		Hiring Patterns	
Percent requiring no experience	68.8	Average number expected to hire	105
Percent having no experience	0.0	Percent say difficult to find qualified applicants	56.3
Worker Attributes		Percent increasing hiring	53.8
Percent full-time employees	73.2	Percent decreasing hiring	30.8
Percent part-time employees	22.3		
Percent temporary employees	4.5	Characteristics of Job	
Percent female	59.1	Union Representation?	68.8
Reason for Leaving Job		Percent providing training	56.2
Percent that leave for promotion	43.8		
Percent that quit for negative work conditions	49.9		
Average percent promoted within 2 years	25.4		
Based on 16 jobs			

Notes: An entry-level job is one that requires no more than high school level education and less than one year of work experience. Information is from the Human Resource department of the firm. 13 percent of workers in these jobs are currently making at least \$15 per hour and 46.7 percent are making at least \$10. Information on work hours of employees (part time, etc.) is based on only 8 responses.

- All but 6.3 percent of the jobs have fringe benefits, although two-thirds of the firms require that employees work a minimum number of hours per week to receive benefits (usually between 20-30 hours). About one-third of the firms require a waiting period before benefits can be used and about one-quarter require employees to work a minimum numbers of hours.
- Paid vacation and sick leave, medical/dental/vision benefits, and retirement are the most cited benefits provided. Over three-quarters of the firms have flexible spending in benefits.
- Child care may be a problem for TANF recipients moving into the work place. Although about three-fourths of the firms allow for flexible scheduling in work hours, few firms provide paid maternity/paternity leave or child care assistance. No firms offer paid child care.

Table 7: Fringe Benefits of Employment

Percent of Companies that Provide:	
Paid vacation	93.8
Medical	93.8
Retirement	87.5
Dental	81.3
Life Insurance	81.3
Flexible spending	78.6
Paid sick leave	75.0
Flexible hours	75.0
Vision	68.8
Tuition reimbursement	62.5
Bonuses	37.5
Child care assistance	30.8
Job sharing	23.1
Stock options	23.1
Profit sharing	12.5
Paid maternity	6.3
Paid paternity	6.3
None	6.3
Paid child care	0.0
Piece rate pay	0.0
Percent Requiring to Receive Benefits:	
Work minimum number hours per week	62.5
Waiting period/probation	31.3
Work minimum number of hours in a year	25.0
Based on 16 jobs	

Notes: Information is from the Human Resource department of the firm.

Knowledge and Skill Requirements

Obtaining employment is only the first step in moving TANF recipients from welfare to work and in low-skill workers gaining sufficiency. After obtaining a job, individuals must successfully maintain employment and advance through the promotion ladders in order to obtain lifetime economic self sufficiency. For this, former welfare recipients must enter the labor market armed with both the knowledge and skills necessary to be successful while on the job and the knowledge and skills necessary to advance to the next higher position.⁵ Surveys administered to the "line supervisor"⁵ were designed to determine both sets of knowledge and skills.

Table 8 shows that employees must have the "soft" skills for success in the entry-level positions. Specifically, we see that:

- Interpersonal skills are extremely important for success in three-quarters of the entry-level jobs. Managing resources and using information are important in about one-half.
- Few line supervisors thought that technology skills were necessary for success in the job.
- Over two-thirds of the line supervisors believe that successful workers should have "soft" skills such as reliability, integrity/honesty, sociability.
- At the entry level, less than one-third of the line supervisors believe that problem solving, decision making and creative thinking are necessary for success.
- Communication, including writing, is the primary "hard" skill that is needed in entry-level positions. Few of the other "harder" skills are viewed as extremely important for success in entry-level jobs by the line supervisors.

⁵ The line supervisor is the manager of the entry-level job that was described by the human resource specialist.

Table 8: Competencies and Preparation

Percent Saying Extremely Important for Success in the Job:	
<i>Competencies</i>	
Interpersonal Skills (working on teams, teaching others, serving customers, leading, negotiating, & working well with people from culturally diverse backgrounds)	71.4
Resources (allocating time, money, materials, & staff)	57.1
Information (acquiring & evaluating data, organizing & maintaining files, interpreting & communicating information, & using computers to process information)	42.9
Systems (understanding social, organizational, & technological systems, monitoring & correcting performance, & designing or improving systems)	28.6
Technology (selecting equipment & tools, applying technology to specific tasks, & maintaining & troubleshooting technologies)	7.1
<i>Preparation</i>	
Reliability	92.9
Integrity and honesty	85.7
Listening	78.6
Self Esteem	78.6
Sociability	78.6
Self management	76.9
Diversity	71.4
Personal hygiene	71.4
Knowing how to learn	64.3
Responsibility	64.3
Problem solving	35.7
Decision making	21.4
Creative thinking	14.3
<i>Skills</i>	
Communication	71.4
Writing	50.0
Reading	35.7
Problem solving	35.7
Technology	30.8
Software or programming	8.3
Math	7.1
Based on 14 jobs	

Notes: Information is from a Line Supervisor of the job.

While few “hard” skills are necessary for entry-level employment, additional skills are necessary for advancement. When line supervisors are asked which of the “hard” skills are necessary for success in both the entry level and in the next higher position, we see that:

- A different mix of communication and writing skills is needed (Table 9). More advanced writing skills and more proactive communication skills are necessary for the employee to successfully advance into the next higher position.

Table 9: Importance of Writing and Communication Skills for Successful Employment and Promotion

Percent Saying that the Skill is Expected In:	This Position	Next Position
<i>Writing</i>		
Simple sentences	64.3	71.4
Take telephone messages	71.4	64.3
Short notes/simple memos	78.6	78.6
Letters	35.7	50.0
Proofread	35.7	42.9
Fill out forms	85.7	64.3
Organize information into a brief report	42.9	64.3
Record data time (etc.) into a log	85.7	64.3
<i>Communication</i>		
Give spoken instructions	85.7	71.4
Choose words appropriate to workplace	85.7	71.4
Make and receive business phone calls	64.3	78.6
Deal with customers	64.3	64.3
Be perceptive of verbal and nonverbal clues	85.7	78.6
Explain products and services	64.3	64.3
Handle complaints	35.7	78.6
Interact with coworkers	92.9	64.3
Sell a product	35.7	28.6
Based on 14 jobs		

Notes: Information is from a Line Supervisor of the job.

- A different mix of reading skills is needed for advancement with more complex reading undertaken at higher level jobs (Table 10).
- The level of math skills required generally increase as the employee advances (Table 10), although the level of math required is generally not high.

Table 10: Importance of Reading and Math Skills for Successful Employment and Promotion

Percent Saying that the Skill is Expected In:	This Position	Next Position
<i>Reading</i>		
Written instructions	85.7	85.7
Maps	42.9	42.9
Safety warnings	92.9	78.6
Product labels	50.0	57.1
Shipping labels	50.0	57.1
Manuals	78.6	71.4
Telephone book	50.0	71.4
Computer printout	28.6	78.6
Forms	71.4	92.9
Contracts and agreements	35.7	78.6
Invoices	14.3	50.0
Memos and letters	78.6	78.6
Logs and journals	50.0	64.3
Work-related schedules	78.6	71.4
<i>Math</i>		
Simple addition/subtraction	71.4	71.4
Multiplication/division	64.3	64.3
Ratios, fractions, decimals, percents	42.9	57.1
Estimate	42.9	57.1
Simple equations	35.7	42.9
Make change	21.4	21.4
Compute or figure discounts (etc.)	14.3	21.4
Interpret data	21.4	42.9
Perform simple measurements	35.7	42.9
Use measurement instruments	21.4	42.9
Use business equipment (e.g., calculator)	50.0	57.1
Based on 14 jobs		

Notes: Information is from a Line Supervisor of the job.

- Problem solving, technology and software/programming skills uniformly increase as the employee moves into the next higher position (Table 11).

Table 11: Importance of Specific Skills for Successful Employment and Promotion

Percent Saying that the Skill is Expected In:	This Position	Next Position
<i>Problem Solving</i>		
Prioritize tasks	64.3	71.4
Gather information	64.3	85.7
Sort and categorize information	64.3	71.4
Identify work-related problems	78.6	92.9
Identify potential solutions to problems	57.1	85.7
Identify barriers to solutions	42.9	85.7
Evaluate results	28.6	71.4
<i>Technology</i>		
Telephone systems	64.3	85.7
Answering machines	42.9	78.6
Copiers	50.0	71.4
Fax machines	42.9	71.4
Macintosh computers	7.1	21.4
Windows or DOS computers	21.4	78.6
<i>Software or Program Skills</i>		
Word processing	7.1	28.6
Spreadsheet	0.0	42.9
Database	7.1	42.9
Email	14.3	28.6
Internet browsers	7.1	14.3
Web page design	0.0	0.0
Multimedia authoring	0.0	0.0
Graphics software	0.0	7.1
Desktop publishing	0.0	7.1
Financial inventory	0.0	7.1
Based on 14 jobs		

Notes: Information is from a Line Supervisor of the job.

Summary of the Labor Market that Faces Entry-Level Workers

In the large firms we surveyed, the hiring process for entry-level jobs is characterized by a variety of recruitment methods, and relatively high entrance requirements. Workers entering the labor market should be aggressive in their job searching and cautioned that they face a labor market with relatively stringent barriers to obtaining entry-level employment. Many firms test for drugs, and mental and physical abilities. The successful applicant must generally have education and work experience that far exceeds the levels posted for the job and they must have "soft" work skills as well. In a nutshell, TANF recipients and low-skilled workers are moving into a market in which there are many employment opportunities but high standards for employment.

Both wage and employment benefits are good for successful applicants, particularly if the job allows the employee to achieve the necessary hours and wait period for benefit accrual. However, welfare recipients may face work difficulties imposed by childcare. Few firms offer childcare assistance and none offer paid childcare, although most of the jobs allow flexible hours and some allow job sharing, which may facilitate combining employment and childcare. Thus, clients with children face jobs in which full-time wages (at an average of \$10.24) may not support childcare, part-time employment may not meet employment requirements for benefits and benefits may not include child care expenses.

To be successful in entry-level positions, applicants must have "soft" workplace-readiness skills and basic communication skills (including writing). As the employee moves up the promotion ladder, skill requirements get "harder". If the workers enter the labor market without the "harder" skills or the capacity to acquire "harder" skills, they will not be able to advance beyond entry-level positions.

Potential Uses

This report describes the labor market for entry-level jobs in San Francisco and the type of jobs that many low-skill workers are likely to find available in the coming year. The researchers assume that by describing the recruitment processes, minimum employment requirements, and benefits from the entry-level jobs in growth sectors of San Francisco's economy, they are aiding DHS in advising its clients on appropriate job search methods and preparing them for a realistic view of the labor market they face. The researchers also assume that by defining the knowledge and skills necessary to obtain and maintain, and advance beyond entry-level jobs, they are providing DHS with information it needs to select appropriate training programs and prepare clients with the tools necessary for long-term employment. This information should be of use to DHS on at least three different levels.

DHS policy makers can benefit from this report because it gives DHS additional information about the broad employment picture in San Francisco's economy. It should aid policy makers in their efforts to see more clearly where the jobs are and where low-skill workers, including TANF recipients, are most likely to find employment.

DHS program developers can also benefit from this report. Information on knowledge and skill levels required in high-growth sectors could help program developers focus their programs on the requirements for employment in high-demand areas. Programs can be fine tuned to give clients the knowledge and skills most needed by employers so that training will coincide more precisely with employment requirements in areas of the greatest opportunity. The same information can benefit economic developers, educators, counselors, caseworkers, CBO staffs, and others involved in shaping the job readiness and skills training of low-income residents.

Job developers can benefit from this report (and the one following on the labor market for Administrative Support jobs). If their clients express interest in a field that is at odds with the knowledge and skills that they have, job developers can use the information in this report to direct them toward another field or advise them of the additional skills they will need. In general, job developers can use the report to paint a realistic picture for clients and help them avoid months of fruitless searching in areas where job opportunities are minimal or where their clients' skills are insufficient.

Job developers have already benefited from the survey process in which they accompanied survey researchers during on-site visits. They learned first hand about the knowledge and skills required, about the hiring processes and the requirements their clients will face. Meeting face-to-face with human resource personnel and line supervisors in the context of the survey research process, gave job developers a structured opportunity to question employers about their needs and a chance to inform employers more fully about themselves and their clients. The face-to-face meetings with employers also established relationships and began an exchange of information between job developers and employers that can continue in the future.

Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Summary and Conclusion

Obtaining good wages and employment benefits takes a commitment to the labor market. Successful applicants will be those who engage in pro-active job searching and who have skills beyond the minimum requirements. Job seekers must be willing to invest in both "soft" and "hard" knowledge and skills in order to meet the standards set by incumbents in the job. Attitude, dependability, and personal skills are necessary to obtain employment and to succeed in entry-level jobs. Education and training and additional "hard" skills are necessary to advance to the next higher position.

Key findings from the report are as follow:

- Posted entry-level employment requirements fall well below those held by the average successful applicant.
- More extensive knowledge and skills are required to advance to the position above entry level. Many advancements require additional education or experience requirements over those for entry-level positions. Seniority alone is not sufficient to be successful in moving up the career ladder.
- "Soft skills" are necessary to get hired but the skills get "harder" as an employee moves up. Many of the "soft skills" necessary for hiring and success in entry-level jobs are what many would consider "common sense" skills—dependability, honesty, sociability, etc.
- The overwhelming number of entry-level jobs is in administrative support. This is true irrespective of industry.
- The requirements for entry-level employment differ dramatically by industry.
- Methods used to recruit employees vary. No one source dominates. Job applicants must use a variety of job search methods to obtain a true picture of the available employment opportunities.

- Many of the “social problems” (e.g. crime, substance abuse, poor work history) will cause employment problems for labor market entrants.
- About one-half of the employees in entry-level positions leave the position for a promotion and about one-half leave for negative work conditions.
- Wages in entry-level jobs are not self-sufficient for a family. Although about 90 percent of all entry-level workers make (or will make) \$10 an hour within a year of hiring, only about one-third will make \$15 within two years.
- Childcare difficulties could cause employment problems. No firms offer paid childcare as a benefit and only about 30 percent offer any type of childcare assistance. Nearly three-quarters of the firms do offer flexible hours, however.
- Most firms have some restrictions on obtaining benefits.

Recommendations

The researchers recommend that DHS continue the survey research process in the future to gather additional information on the labor market for entry-level positions and expand existing information on the knowledge and skills necessary to obtain and advance beyond those positions. The researchers see this report as a good beginning; but the data collection efforts must be sustained if the information flow is to be used to its fullest potential. Continuing the survey process will have the following corollary benefits:

- Relationships between job developers and employers can be expanded. Current relationships are only beginning to develop between current personnel in firms and current job developers. Unfortunately, both job developers and employees in firms change. As a result, the process must be continued if relationships are to be sustained and required.
- Information at this stage provides only a snapshot of the labor market facing low-skill workers. The report drew information from large employers in growing sectors of the economy. Information from different industries, from midsize firms or from small employers might present a different picture. Data collection efforts must continue to confirm the results presented here and to track changes in the labor market for entry-level jobs in different industries and firms. Changes in hiring processes and in knowledge and skill requirements are also likely to occur and must be monitored over time.
- Finally, continued data collection will increase the number of industries and occupations for which labor market data is available. This data can be used to generate reports, such as the Administrative Support Occupational Report that is included here. Such reports can provide labor-market and employment information about specific industries or occupations. This information can then be used to advise clients on which sectors or occupational clusters contain jobs that best match their current skill set or what knowledge and skill sets need to be developed for success in a particular industry or occupation.

Administrative Support Occupations Report

Executive Summary for Administrative Support Report

This mini-report details the requirements for employment in administrative support occupations. It is designed to identify the appropriate knowledge and skills that job seekers need to fill entry-level administrative support occupations. It outlines the minimum qualifications for entry-level administrative support positions, including posted requirements for education and work experience. However, meeting the posted job requirements may not be sufficient for low-skill job seekers to gain employment in the field. Job entrants must pass employment barriers such as drug tests, work history requirements, license requirements, and unstated education and work experience thresholds. They must also have baseline “soft” skills. Those who gain employment at the entry level must have the requisite knowledge and skills to move up the career ladders within administrative support.

This report identifies the knowledge and skills that are needed for success in both the entry-level position and in the next higher administrative support position. With this information, employment specialists and job developers will be better able to steer low-skill job seekers who are interested in pursuing work in the administrative support field toward training programs that help them fulfill the job requirements. The report draws on the survey responses from employers in San Francisco to identify new entry-level⁶ administrative support job opportunities, clarify the nature of the jobs created, and identify the skills sets required for these positions.

Occupations in the area of administrative support (including clerical) offer a good opportunity for low-skill job seekers to move into the workplace. They are the most frequently cited entry-level jobs with projected openings next year and they employ a high percentage of females. Jobs in this area carry relatively high starting wages and have less English proficiency and age requirements than other entry-level occupations. Childcare assistance is more prevalent in these positions than other entry-level occupations.

There are some drawbacks to administrative support occupations. Most importantly, education and work requirements may be higher for entrance than for entry-level positions in other areas. Administrative support positions are also more likely than others to require references and employment tests during the application process.

⁶ Entry level is defined as a job that requires only a high school education and less than a year of work experience. (Appendix I provides a detailed description of the process).

Specific knowledge and skill requirements in this area are summarized below:

- Higher levels of communication and honesty/integrity are expected than in other entry-level positions.
- Less preparation is expected in creative thinking, decision making and problem solving than for other entry-level positions, although about one-quarter of the supervisors think that these skills are very important preparation for the job.
- Understanding and acquiring information is a skill that is frequently mentioned as expected in entry-level workers.
- Reading, writing, and communication are very important in about one-half of the administrative support positions.
- Reading more complex material (e.g., contracts, agreements, and invoices) is expected of workers in over half of the administrative support positions above entry level.
- Workers in one-half or three-quarters of the entry-level and promotional positions are expected to perform simple arithmetic operations and interpret data.
- Few workers in entry-level positions are expected to have software or programming skills. This changes as workers advance in the field. *Thus, if low-skill workers want to climb the promotional ladder in administrative support positions, they should bring their software or programming skills into the labor market or plan on acquiring them during employment.*

Administrative Support Occupations

Administrative support occupations are defined as those:

"Clerical (positions) and...occupations concerned with preparing, transcribing, transferring, systematizing, and preserving written communications and records; collecting accounts; gathering and distributing information; operating office machines and electronic data-processing equipment; storing, distributing, and accounting for stores of materials; operating telephone switchboards, distributing mail and delivering messages; and performing other administrative support and clerical duties."⁷

The San Francisco employers who were surveyed listed the following occupations in this field as having openings:

- General office clerks
- Information clerks
- Personnel clerks
- File clerks
- Records clerks
- Bookkeepers and accounting clerks
- Office machine operators
- Postal clerks
- Stock and inventory clerks
- Meter readers
- Bank tellers
- Data entry keyers
- Teachers aides

Jobs in the administrative support area are projected to be available next year. In fact, two-thirds of all of the jobs listed by firms in our sample as coming available were in administrative support (including clerical). There were an average of 107 openings for each position (see Table 1 in the main report). All industries included in the survey (see Appendix I) with entry-level jobs were expected to have openings in the administrative support area in the next year. This occupational field therefore represents good employment potential for low-skill job seekers. One cautionary note: Temporary service firms may be filling a large portion of the administrative job openings. In fact, 89 percent of the openings in temporary services firms are in this field and these firms had an average of 416 openings per posting (see Table 2 in the main report).

Entrance into Administrative Support Positions

⁷ U.S. Department of Commerce, Standard Occupational Classification Manual. Washington DC: USGPO.

Jobs in administrative support require more education and training than do other entry-level positions, although they may require less specific skills (Table 1Admin). Only about one-quarter of the jobs in this field are filled by applicants with less than a high school education and only about one-quarter require no work experience. However, the higher level of education and work experience requirements translate into higher levels of starting pay as compared to other entry-level positions.⁸ Increased wages and the relatively high proportion of females in entry-level administrative support positions in San Francisco (like the rest of the country) make positions in these fields good options for TANF recipients and other low-skill job seekers to enter.

Table 1Admin: Characteristics of Entry-Level Jobs in Administrative Support

Job Characteristics	
Percent requiring less than high school education	27.8
Percent requiring no experience	27.8
Percent requiring specific skills	3.7
Average percent female in job	56.5
Average starting pay in job	10.27
Average number of projected openings	107
Based on 59 jobs	

Notes: An entry-level job is one that requires no more than high school level education and less than one year of work experience. Numbers are averages (percent females and starting pay) or medians (minimum education and work experience). If a pay range is reported, the low end of the range is stated.

Recruiting for administrative support positions may be more internal to firms than for other entry-level positions (Table 2Admin). A larger percentage of administrative support positions than in other entry-level positions are filled by hiring from within or are posted in internal job bulletins. However, because temporary services, state employment services, phone job-lines are more frequently used recruiting tools in this area than other entry-level areas, DHS can build its ties to human resource departments within the firms and develop its sources of information for job openings in this field.

⁸ Comparisons can be seen by examining the Tables in the main text.

Table 2Admin: Recruitment Methods for Entry-Level Jobs in Administrative Support

Percent Firms using the following to recruit for job	
Hiring from within	100.0
Job bulletins	88.9
State employment service	77.8
Phone job line	77.8
Referrals/walk-ins	77.8
Web posting	77.8
Job fairs	66.7
Schools and colleges	66.7
Verbal networking	66.7
Newspaper	55.6
Television or radio	37.5
Staffing/temporary services	11.1
Based on 9 jobs	

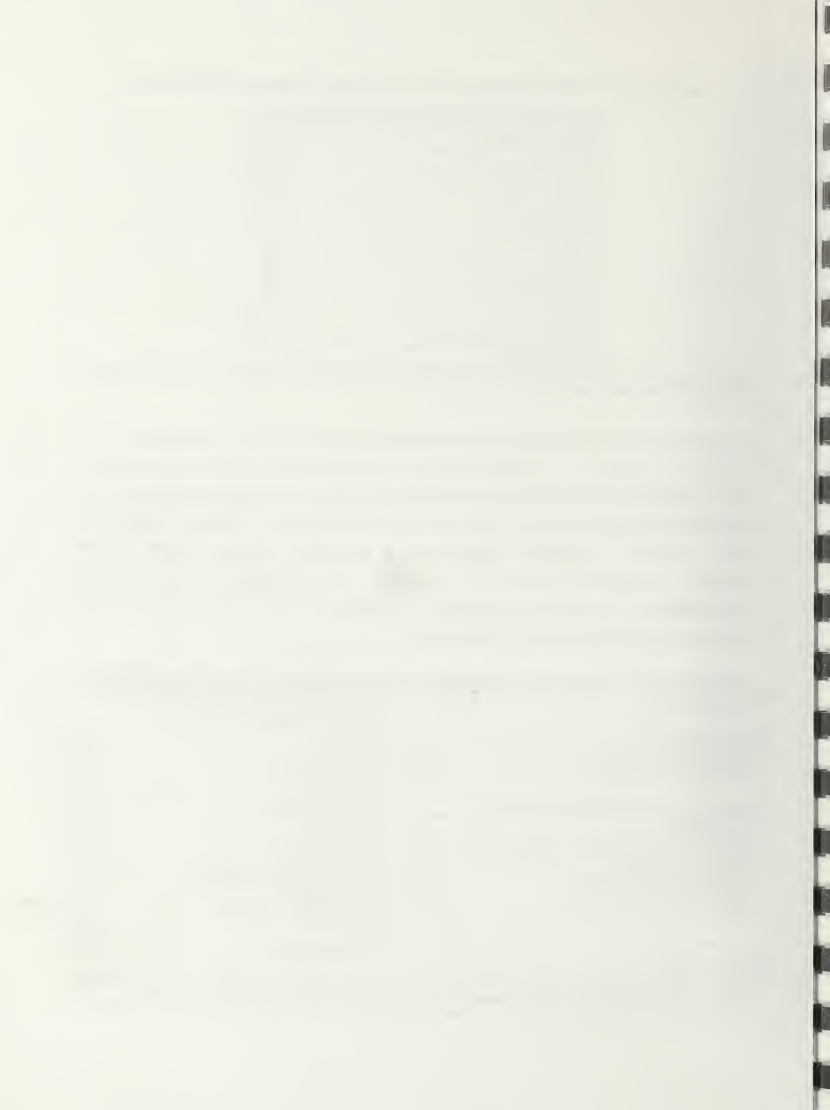
Notes: An entry-level job is one that requires no more than high school level education and less than one year of work experience. Information is from the Human Resource department of the firm.

Employment barriers in administrative support occupations are as high or higher than in other entry-level occupations. They also differ slightly from those in other entry-level occupations (Table 3Admin). Individuals interested in administrative support employment are less likely to face a minimum age requirement (although two-thirds of the jobs still have some requirement along these lines) and less likely to be required to speak and understand English very well (although over half still must understand it very well). Over three-quarters of the entry-level jobs in administrative support require references, a percentage that exceeds other entry-level jobs; and nearly two-thirds require a test for placement.

Table 3Admin: Characteristics Necessary for Entry-Level Jobs in Administrative Support

Percent Saying That:		Does the Company Require the Following before Employment can Begin:	
<i>Employees need to:</i>		Drug test?	33.3
Speak English very well?	28.6	Medical exam?	33.3
Understand English very well?	57.1	Fingerprinting?	55.6
		Credit check?	22.2
<i>The hiring decision depends "very much" on:</i>		U.S. Citizenship?	66.7
Criminal Record	37.5	No felonies?	42.9
History of substance abuse or mental problems	50.0	References?	77.8
No recent work history	33.3	Drivers license?	33.3
Long period of unemployment	22.2	Language other than English?	33.3
Only short term job experience	11.1	Minimum age?	66.7
		Certification or license?	22.2
		Test?	66.7
		Physical ability?	33.3
Based on 9 jobs			

Notes: An entry-level job is one that requires no more than high school level education and less than one year of work experience. Information is from the Human Resource department of the firm. One human resource specialists (out of 9) declined to answer questions about hiring and criminal records and two declined to answer the question about hiring and history of substance abuse.



Characteristics of Administrative Support Positions

The characteristics of and outcomes from the administrative support occupations are surprisingly similar to those of other entry-level jobs⁹ (Table 4Admin). There are a few notable exceptions:

- All of the administrative support positions pay \$10.00 per hour within a year, a larger percentage than other entry-level positions.
- Only about 20 percent of the positions will pay \$15.00 per hour within two years, a smaller percentage than other entry-level positions. This suggests that although starting wages are higher in the field, wages may not raise as rapidly as in other fields.
- A much larger percentage of administration support positions are female than other positions.

Table 4Admin: Characteristics of Entry-Level Jobs in Administrative Support

Job Requirements and Worker Attributes		Pay	
<i>Education</i>		Average hourly wage	10.73
Percent not requiring high school graduation	55.6	Percent making \$15 in 1.5-2 years	22.2
Percent having less than high school graduation	0.0	Percent making \$10 within a year	100.0
Percent having at least some college	42.9		
<i>Work Experience</i>		Hiring Patterns	
Percent requiring no previous work experience	66.7	Average number expected to hire	22
Percent having no previous work experience	0.0	Percent difficult to find qualified applicants	77.8
Worker Attributes		Percent increasing hiring	57.1
Percent full-time employees	72.9	Percent decreasing hiring	42.9
Percent part-time employees	27.1		
Percent temporary employees	0.0	Characteristics of Job	
Percent female	75.6	Union representation?	66.7
Reason for Leaving Job		Percent providing training	55.6
Percent leave for promotion	44.4		
Percent quit for negative work conditions	44.4		
Average percent promoted within 2 years	26.7		
Based on 9 jobs			

Notes: An entry-level job is one that requires no more than high school level education and less than one year of work experience. Information is from the Human Resource department of the firm. 11.1 percent of workers in these jobs are currently making at least \$15 per hour and 55.6 percent are making at least \$10. Information on work hours of employees (part time, etc.) is based on only 3 responses.

⁹ The one exception is the lower number of projected openings that is noted on Table 4Admin as compared to Table 6. This is due to the omission from the human resource portion of the survey of the largest employers of clerical workers in San Francisco.

Requirements for the “soft skills” are also very similar to those required in other entry-level positions, although there may be an increased emphasis on education and work requirements, communication, honesty and integrity, and problem solving. (See Table 5Admin, which lists the “soft” characteristics in the order of frequency in all entry-level jobs.) In fact, three-quarters of the firms that specifically mentioned education and work requirements as desirable in their “ideal” entry-level employee were describing employees in administrative support. Desirable characteristics in entry-level employees in all occupations include communication, honesty/integrity, and problem solving described administrative support employees.

Table 5Admin: Description of Ideal Employee: To get Hired in Administrative Support

Describe your Ideal Employee (Frequency)	
Dependable or reliable	3
Friendly or personal skills	3
Attitude	2
Meets education or experience qualifications	3
Flexibility	1
Follows rules or supervisor	0
Hygiene/appearance	1
Trainable	1
Communication skills	3
Customer service	1
Initiative/motivation	1
Dedication/want to work	1
Honesty/integrity	2
Problem solving	1
Based on responses by 8 Human Resource specialists	

Notes: Information is from the Human Resource department of the firm.

While the benefit package that accompanies administrative support employment generally follows those offered in other entry-level positions, key differences exist in the area of childcare support (Table 6Admin). *An increasing percentage of administrative support positions come with child care assistance, paid maternity/paternity leave and job sharing* as compared to other entry-level positions. This is not to say that childcare assistance is abundant. In fact, less than half of the firms offer child care assistance. Rather, the assistance is available to a greater extent in these positions than other entry-level positions. Thus, workers who are constrained in employment opportunities by childcare may be better off seeking administrative support positions than in other entry-level jobs.

Table 6Admin: Benefits of Employment in Administrative Support

Percent of Companies Providing:	
Paid vacation	100.0
Retirement	100.0
Medical	100.0
Life Insurance	88.9
Flexible spending	88.9
Paid sick leave	77.8
Dental	77.8
Vision	66.7
Tuition reimbursement	66.7
Flexible hours	55.6
Child care assistance	42.9
Job sharing	42.9
Bonuses	33.3
Stock options	28.6
Paid maternity	11.1
Paid paternity	11.1
Profit sharing	11.1
Piece rate pay	0.0
Paid child care	0.0
None	0.0
Percent requiring to receive benefits:	
Work minimum number hours per week	55.6
Waiting period/probation	22.2
Minimum hours worked per year	33.3
Based on 9 jobs	

Notes: Information is from the Human Resource department of the firm.

Knowledge and Skills

Knowledge and skill requirements in administrative support positions generally parallel those required in other entry-level occupations. Interpersonal and information skills are extremely important in about three-quarters of the positions and use of technology per say is not important (Table 7Admin). As in other entry-level positions, reliability, integrity/honesty and other "soft" skills are essential, with nearly all supervisors saying that these skills are extremely important. Less important are creative thinking, decision making and problem solving skills, although about one-quarter of the supervisors think that these skills are very important preparation for the job. Harder skills are even less important, although reading, writing, and communication are very important in about one-half of the positions.



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Table 7Admin: Competencies and Preparation in Administrative Support

Percent saying extremely important	
Competencies	
Resources (allocating time, money, materials, and staff)	57
Interpersonal Skills (working on teams, teaching others, serving customers, leading, negotiating, and working well with people from culturally diverse backgrounds)	71
Information (acquiring and evaluating data, organizing and maintaining files, interpreting and communicating information, and using computers to process information)	71
Systems (understanding social, organizational, and technological systems, monitoring and correcting performance, and designing or improving systems)	28
Technology (selecting equipment and tools, applying technology to specific tasks, and maintaining and troubleshooting technologies)	0
Preparation	
Listening	71
Creative thinking	28
Decision making	28
Problem solving	28
Knowing how to learn	57
Responsibility	57
Self Esteem	71
Sociability	71
Integrity and honesty	100
Self management	71
Diversity	85
Reliability	100
Personal Hygiene	85
Skills	
Reading	57
Math	0
Writing	42
Communication	57
Problem Solving	14
Technology	28
Software or Programming	14

Based on 7 jobs

Notes: Information is from a Line Supervisor of the job.

Understanding and acquiring information are the “harder” skills that are necessary for successful employment in and movement beyond entry-level administrative support positions. As compared to other entry-level positions writing and communication skills are less expected, although workers in nearly three-quarters of the entry-level administrative support positions are expected to interact appropriately in written and verbal communication in the work environment (Table 8Admin). These expectations actually fall lower when a worker moves to the next higher position.

Table 8Admin: Importance of Writing and Communication Skills for Successful Employment and Promotion in Administrative Support

Percent Saying that the Skill is Expected in:	This Position	Next Position
<i>Writing</i>		
Simple sentences	42.9	57.1
Take telephone messages	85.7	42.9
Short notes/simple memos	71.4	57.1
Letters	57.1	42.9
Proofread	57.1	42.9
Fill out forms	85.7	28.6
Organize information into a brief report	42.9	28.6
Record data time (etc.) into a log	71.4	28.6
<i>Communication</i>		
Give spoken instructions	71.4	57.1
Choose works appropriate to workplace	71.4	57.1
Make and receive business phone calls	71.4	71.4
Deal with customers	42.9	57.1
Be perceptive of verbal and nonverbal clues	71.4	71.4
Explain products and services	42.9	57.1
Handle complaints	28.6	71.4
Interact with coworkers	85.7	57.1
Sell a product	14.3	14.3
<i>Based on 7 jobs</i>		

Notes: Information is from a Line Supervisor of the job.

Expectations about simple reading skills also fall with movement into the next higher position (Table 9Admin). However, reading more complex material (e.g., contracts, agreements, and invoices) is expected of workers in over one-half of the administrative support positions above entry level. Math requirements remain relatively stable with promotional increases. In both cases, workers in one-half or three-quarters of the positions are expected to perform simple arithmetic operations and interpret data.

Table 9Admin: Importance of Reading and Math Skills for Successful Employment and Promotion in Administrative Support

Percent Saying that the Skill is Expected in:	This Position	Next Position
<i>Writing</i>		
Written instructions	100.0	85.7
Maps	42.9	42.9
Safety warnings	100.0	85.7
Product labels	42.9	57.1
Shipping labels	42.9	57.1
Manuals	71.4	57.1
Telephone book	57.1	57.1
Computer printout	28.6	71.4
Forms	100.0	85.7
Contracts and agreements	14.3	57.1
Invoices	14.3	57.1
Memos and letters	71.4	71.4
Logs and journals	14.3	42.9
Work-related schedules	57.1	57.1
<i>Math</i>		
Simple addition/subtraction	71.4	71.4
Multiplication/division	71.4	57.1
Ratios, fractions, decimals, percents	42.9	57.1
Estimate	42.9	57.1
Simple equations	42.9	28.6
Make change	14.3	14.3
Compute or figure discounts (etc.)	0.0	0.0
Interpret data	42.9	57.1
Perform simple measurements	28.6	14.3
Use measurement instruments	28.6	28.6
Use business equipment (e.g., calculator)	71.4	57.1
<i>Based on 7 jobs</i>		

Notes: Information is from a Line Supervisor of the job.

Workers are expected to have problem solving skills in one-half of the entry-level positions. That proportion increases in the next-step positions (Table 10Admin). Expectations about technology skills remain fairly stable as workers move up the promotion ladder, although workers are expected to know more about Windows or DOS as they progress. Workers in over half of the administrative support positions are expected to understand office technologies.

The big change in skill expectations as workers advance in administrative support positions is in software or programming skills. While workers in few entry-level positions are expected to have skills in these areas, workers in between one-quarter and 40 percent of the more advanced positions are expected to have these skills. *Thus, if TANF recipients or low-skill job seekers expect to climb the promotional ladder in administrative support positions, they should bring software or programming skills into the labor market or plan to acquire them.*

Table 10Admin: Importance of Problem Solving, Technology, and Software Skills for Successful Employment and Promotion in Administrative Support

Percent Saying that the Skill is Expected In:	This Position	Next Position
<i>Problem Solving</i>		
Prioritize tasks	42.9	42.9
Gather information	42.9	71.4
Sort and categorize information	42.9	42.9
Identify work-related problems	71.4	85.7
Identify potential solutions to problems	57.1	71.4
Identify barriers to solutions	42.9	71.4
Evaluate results	42.9	57.1
<i>Technology</i>		
Telephone systems	71.4	71.4
Answering machines	57.1	57.1
Copiers	71.4	57.1
Fax machines	57.1	57.1
Macintosh computers	14.3	14.3
Windows or DOS computers	14.3	57.1
<i>Software or Program skills</i>		
Word processing	14.3	28.6
Spreadsheet	0.0	28.6
Database	0.0	42.9
Email	28.6	42.9
Internet browsers	14.3	28.6
Web page design	0.0	0.0
Multimedia authoring	0.0	0.0
Graphics software	0.0	14.3
Desktop publishing	0.0	14.3
Financial inventory	0.0	0.0
Based on 7 jobs		

Notes: Information is from a Line Supervisor of the job.

Summary and Conclusions

Occupations in administrative support offer a good opportunity for low-skill job seekers to move into the workplace. They are the most frequently cited entry-level jobs with projected growth in the next year and they employ a high percentage of females. Jobs in this area carry relatively high starting wages and have fewer English proficiency and age requirements than other entry-level occupations. Childcare assistance is more prevalent in these positions than other entry-level occupations. Major drawbacks from entering administrative support occupations include higher education and work experience requirements and increased use of reference letters and employment tests. Although "soft" skills are required to enter administrative support positions, few "hard skills" are necessary at the entry level. Higher positions require "harder" skills, including software or programming skills. In fact, knowledge of software and software programming skills may be the critical "hard" skill that differentiates administrative support occupations from other fields at the lower employment levels.

APPENDIX I:
DATA COLLECTION METHODS

The researchers designed a survey to gather specific information on entry-level jobs¹ within growth sectors of the economy. The survey has three components: the Phone Script, the Human Resources Survey, and the Line Supervisor Survey. The Phone Script provides the format for the initial contact with the employer. It was designed to elicit information on the entry-level jobs that will be available in that firm in the next year, and to gather basic information about each job (e.g., wages, education and training requirements, percent female employment). The Human Resources survey was designed to gather more specific information about the hiring requirements for a specific entry-level job that was selected from the Phone Script listing. The Line Supervisor survey was designed to gather specific information about the same job with respect to the knowledge and skills that someone needs to be successful in the same entry-level job and what it takes to move into the next "higher" position.²

In order to uncover difficulties with either the survey instrument or the survey process, we piloted a draft of the survey on five companies. Of those five, one was not hiring any entry-level positions. As a result, we did not arrange for follow-up interviews with that firm. We moved another firm from the pilot into the sample selected for the final survey administration. For the pilot we completed three Human Resources Surveys and one Line Supervisor Survey. DHS Job Developers were not present during the piloting of the surveys.

After piloting the survey, we finalized the survey questions and wrote a training handbook. We also held a training session for all DHS personnel involved in the interview process, including the Job Developers who accompanied the survey researcher on the site interviews. We have included data from the pilot in the database because we altered only a few questions as a result of the pilot and we left the survey process unchanged. The few questions that were modified or added after the pilot were coded as "missing information" in the databases. All pilot surveys are well identified in each database.

¹ Entry-level jobs are defined as those requiring a high school education and less than one year of training.

² The survey researchers completed the Phone Scripts. The Human Resources and Line Supervisor surveys were completed at the firm's site with both surveyor researchers and a DHS Job Developer present.

SELECTION OF FIRMS AND JOBS FOR INTERVIEWS

Surveys were targeted toward firms in industries that the researchers thought would hire TANF recipients and other low-skill job seekers. We used two databases to aid us in the selection process. First, we constructed a database of previous employers of GAIN recipients from the DHS GEMS Application System Employment Report on the companies where GAIN recipients had found jobs from March 1997 to March 1998. Second, we built a database of the 25 largest employers in San Francisco and the top Bay Area public and private companies.³

We used data from Michael Potepan's May 1, 1998, report "Economic Expansion in San Francisco in the 1990's" to identify growth industries. From that report we selected the following industries: Services for Business, Health, Education, Social Services, & Non-Profits; Retail Trade; Public Utilities; and Finance & Insurance. We then identified the firms with the largest number of employees in each sector. We then met with DHS staff and together we selected employers to be interviewed from these lists. At that meeting, DHS staff added firms they felt would be good sources of employment in San Francisco.⁴ In total we selected 21 firms to be interviewed. Later we added 9 more firms from growth sectors in which we had previously selected a firm. Those additional firms were again selected with input from DHS staff.

The Phone Script often provided us with several entry-level job titles within each firm. In those cases, we asked DHS staff to select one job title from the job-title list at the firms. We then surveyed the human resource specialists and line supervisors in each firm to gather more in-depth information about the job title that DHS selected.

³ Sources include "The Chronicle 500: Biggest 500 Bay Area Public Companies." San Francisco Chronicle, April 27, 1998; and "25 Largest Employers in San Francisco." San Francisco Business Times, February 20, 1998.

⁴ These firms included Chevron, MUNI, San Francisco Recreation and Parks, Pacific Bell, and the United States Post Office.



SURVEY COMPLETION

Thirty-five firms were contacted with 29 Phone Scripts, 16 Human Resources and 14 Line Supervisor Surveys completed.⁵ (See Appendix Table 1.) Of these nineteen firms, five were not hiring any entry-level positions, and, therefore, no follow-up interviews were arranged.

Appendix Table 1: Firms in Sample

Industries	Firms
<i>Business Services</i> (n=10)	ABM Industries APS Security Pinkerton Security
<i>Multimedia</i> (n=5)	Advent Software Digital Generation Systems Cnet Macromedia Walker Interactive Systems
<i>Temporary Agencies</i> (n=2)	Corestaff Manpower
<i>Services</i> (n=6)	
<i>Health Services</i> (n=2)	California Pacific Medical Center Kaiser Foundation Hospital
<i>Education Services</i> (n=4)	City College of San Francisco San Francisco State University San Francisco Unified School District University of California, San Francisco
<i>Retail</i> (n=6)	Gap Goodwill Industries Macy's West Safeway Sharper Image Williams Sonoma
<i>Transportation, Communication, Public Utilities</i> (n=3)	MUNI Pacific Bell Pacific Gas and Electric
<i>Finance, Insurance and Real Estate</i> (n=7)	Bank of America BRE Properties First Republic Nations Banc Montgomery Security Providian Finance Schwab Trans America Corporation
<i>Miscellaneous Government</i> (n=2)	SF Parks and Recreation US Postal Service
<i>Not Elsewhere Classified</i> (n=1)	Chevron

⁵ During the piloting of the surveys three Human Resource and one Line Supervisor surveys were completed, which caused a discrepancy in the number of Human Resource and Line Supervisor surveys that were completed. Data from the Line Supervisor Survey of the two firms was virtually impossible to obtain. In one firm, the pilot process revealed that the Phone Script yielded a job that did not fit our criteria for inclusion in the Human Resource and Line Supervisor survey. The Phone Script was redesigned to eliminate this problem. In the other firm, the person completing the Human Resource survey was uncooperative and the survey process had to be truncated.

Contact could not be established in nine of these firms. (See Appendix Table 2.) Of the remaining 26 firms, seven were not hiring any entry-level positions, and therefore, no follow-up information interviews were arranged. Four firms had entry-level jobs but were unwilling to continue with Human Resource or Line Supervisor interviews. Two firms had entry-level jobs but similar firms had already been included in the sampling and, as a result, continued interviews with these firms were not pursued because of the fear of over sampling these firm types.

Appendix Table 2: A Summary of Data Collection

Industry	Firms Contacted	Phone Scripts					Human Resource and Line Supervisor	
		Could not Contact	No Entry- level Jobs,	Entry-level Jobs, but were not willing to be Interviewed	Entry-level Jobs, but Not Interviewed (duplicate information)	Entry-level Jobs, and Interviewed	Human Resources	Line Supervisor
Services for Business	10	2	4	1	1	3	3	2
Health, Education, & Social Services	6	1	0	0	0	5	5	5
Retail Trade	6	0	0	2	1	3	3	3
Transportation, Communication, & Public Utilities	3	0	1	0	0	2	2	2
Finance, Insurance, and Real Estate	7	3	1	1	0	1	1	1
Miscellaneous Government	2	0	0	0	0	2	2	1
Not Elsewhere Classified	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	35	6	7	4	2	16	16	14

Job titles for all 29 firms that could be contacted were included in an aggregate analysis of entry-level jobs. This analysis therefore reflects multiple firms from each of the growth sectors of San Francisco's economy. The majority of firms in this analysis are from business services, which is the sector of the economy that is most likely to see continued growth. Although the 16 Human Resource and Line Supervisor surveys reflect each sector, there is only one firm included from the Finance, Insurance, and Real Estate sector and five firms from the Health, Education and Social Services sector. This represents a slight over representation of firms in the Health, Education and Social Services sector and an under representation in the Finance, Insurance, and Real Estate sector.

APPENDIX II:
FOCUS GROUP SUMMARY AND TRANSCRIPTION



Attendees:

<u>University</u>	<u>DHS</u>	
Gib Robinson (project director)	Jeanne Brooks Bill Wedemeyer	Wanda Jung
Nan Maxwell (facilitator)	<i>Job Developers</i>	
Susan Gonzales (interviewer)	John Bailey	Tommy Joeshep
	Ida Johnson	Steven Lloyd
	Darlene Morgan	Laurell Perry
	Diane Cohen-Silber	
	Sylvia Tiungson	

On September 10, 1998 many of the individuals who were involved in collecting data on the knowledge and skills necessary to move TANF recipients from welfare to work met in a focus group structure to discuss what the job developers had and could learn from:

- the data that were collected
- the relationships that were built
- the survey process.

During this focus group meeting, job developers shared information with each other, with other personnel for DHS, and with researchers from the CSU. The focus group was introduced by Bill Wedemeyer of DHS and facilitated by Nan Maxwell of the CSU. We present the discussion that occurred in this focus group in two different forms:

1. a *summary* of the ideas presented in the focus group. This is a mildly edited and summarized version of the focus group transcript that extracts the major points that were made. In this editing, we tried to preserve and highlight the central points made in each comment by focusing the thoughts and change the grammar and sentence structure so that it better reflects written communication.
2. an exact *transcript* of what was said. The focus group was recorded on tape and transcribed. Because the focus group was (intentionally) conversational, this transcription reflects verbal communication. That is, it recorded the grammar, sentence structure and thought processes as they occurred.

Each presentation has the questions in boldface and italics with the individual comments or points following.

SUMMARY

*What did you gain from the interviews with human resource people in the different firms?
From the line supervisor?*

- One of the good things about the survey was that for a moment the employers were captive to the survey and so we were able to obtain information.
- Also learned that the administrative positions and clerks know most of the information and are a great resource.
- Each company has its own system on how to apply for openings.
- California Pacific Medical is like 40 hospitals in one, so I won't only be developing relationships with one Human Resources manager or one line supervisor, but perhaps several hundred since the organization is so large.
- The whole process was very well organized. This made the process very easy. I just walked in and asked questions that pertain to how I could better assist my clients as a job developer.
- It helped to learn about how the hiring process is conducted and it also was very useful to meet face to face to create relationships.
- I also learned about employer expectations and plans for the future of hiring about 300 bus drivers within the next year.
- It was very interesting to see the different perspectives from the Human Resources (HR) and the line supervisors' descriptions of requirements.
- The specific criteria for meeting employment requirements was very important as I work with my clients to find the proper fit.
- In talking to the security company, I learned that they had a high regard for their employees, and that they treat them with respect. Many of their former employees become an actual client.
- I learned more about that industry that I ever knew, and once again by actually meeting with the HR person I was able to approach her in a CALJOBS workshop and personally address her. I felt very comfortable being able to communicate with her. It was one of the greater learning experiences for me.
- I thought the whole process was really helpful and interesting.
- I discovered that all employees that start at Safeway start as a courtesy clerk, and that they are the only ones that actually work 40 hours. All other positions are usually part-time.
- It was interesting to see that employment, recruitment, and staffing are changing. So many employers are using agencies to recruit and many times when that is the case, it takes away the flexibility that many employers may have in hiring.



- Safeway, hires on an individual basis for each store and each store has a little flexibility in who they want to hire.
- I think that we get good information from this process to use as job developers on how to approach the employers and how to get this type of information that is useful.
- I felt that the survey was very well planned and organized. It was targeted to get the pertinent information. It was really good.
- I was able to establish the contact with the Human Resources Manager, learn about that particular position, and have a clear understanding of the requirements for education, units, child development expectations.
- I gained a better understanding of the expectations for employment for a client who is heading in that direction.
- The survey was very well planned and the method seems really good.
- I would like to see more entry-level jobs and other industries added to the data base.
- The majority of the positions were clerical and I would like to see more production type jobs.
- The Unified School District had very few openings for entry-level jobs. Perhaps it may be because it was end of the school year.
- The HR didn't really know much about the openings and did refer us to talk to the individual school principals for openings.
- It was very difficult to contact anyone at the schools because of the end of the school year.
- I really appreciate the good job Susan has done to make it easier to approach the employers.
- I learned how to ask certain questions and which ones not to ask.
- I have always had reservations about temp agencies, but since going to Manpower I have learned that they are a very good resource.
- I learned how to present questions and find out information about various types of jobs for non English speaking clients.
- I also learned that agencies do provide benefits such as vacation and sick leave.
- This information was very important for me to pass on to my clients.
- It has also helped me to understand the types of soft skills employers expect from the clients.

Is there other information that we could gain from these interviews that would be useful to you as job developers?

- Safeway kept stressing the main quality to look for is customer service. This information not clearly written enough in the job description how important it is to become successful.
- You get the impression that the written material the employees give you, i.e. job description, does not always give you the information about the soft skills side that so many employers value and expect in an employee.
- I think that employers expect soft skills and just look at (hard) skill listed on the application. Only when individuals are hired do they discover the lack of the soft skills.
- I found that the interview with the line supervisor was more useful and valuable information because they knew the actual job functions and the details of what is expected.
- When you are going to a particular employer, one particular person can be asked about entry-level jobs, we should be able to ask about other entry-level jobs within the firm.
- We also found that Safeway uses a "Happy Test", which is a scaled down type of personality profile, and that more and more employers are applying this type of test to their employees.

What problems did you encounter or what weakness did you see in the current interview structure? How would you address them? Other than the person not reading the mail.

- The process has helped me to be in more contact with other people within the firms.
- I was able to get on the mailing list for job openings, which helped me to not only see any entry-level jobs, but to also see other openings that entry-level positions could work towards.
- I didn't participate in the program, but I think it would be good to get a hundred people within the School District rather than just one since there are so many other areas within the district that offer various types of entry-level jobs.
- One of the products that should be included is that we have CALJOBS database to put jobs in. It is all the same thing. As large as the employers gets or however small the employer is, they still want that personal attention with the one-on-one contact.
- The relationship building is very important to continue to work personally with each employer and accomplish one common goal—to match our clients with their jobs.
- I found that human relations are very important, and that keeping a constant contact can serve to be very valuable to both parties. I followed up with a client and he was very grateful that I did.

What information from the surveys will be most useful? How will it be used?

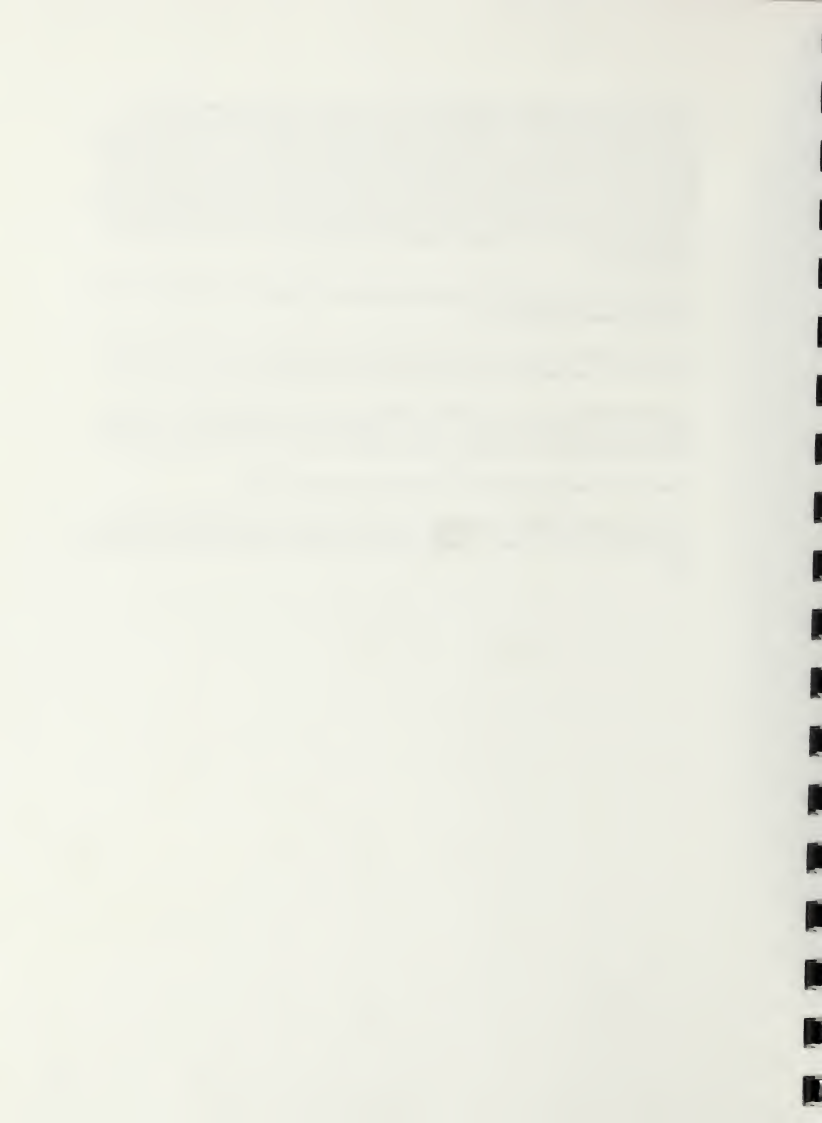
- One of the most useful questions in the survey I found was how is it possible to get to the next step in the job. This is very helpful for our clients to help them understand the progression of the job.

What do you think you can gain from continuing this project?

- I think we have to be very careful as to not saturating the employer market with surveys. I'm concerned that this might turn the employer off. Maybe we could do a mail follow-up and whatever we get back we get back, but if switching the focus of the survey to medium size companies. I don't think going back to the same firms would serve any great purpose.
- I think we should go out to same industries but different companies.
- If nothing else to go back to establish the relationship.
- We as colleagues have touched on the information gathered, but this (the focus group) is the first time it was centered all together.
- There was information about various companies that we shared with each other.
- As job developers we share information as well as problems and try to help one another.
- I think the survey questions were great, they really advanced our knowledge about asking employers questions and which ones were appropriate to ask. Without this I would not know which questions to ask these employers. I was able to give reasons to why I am asking the questions and able to see the whole project and get the information to tell the clients what to expect.
- The background information was very helpful to know when working with clients that do not meet those requirements.
- The application process information was very important to know because of the constant changing in these processes.



- Learning is a reciprocal, the way that you have helped shape the process and the relationship building is part of allowing us a very different access to the employers. It seems to me that builds on that if you walked in cold to employers, you might not do this academic thing, the formality of it, and to some extent that going with a researcher as part of research project gives you the permission to ask these questions and get them down all in one. I'm wondering if that was one of the advantages to providing some type of cover in the guise of research formality, which you may not get for several months if you were talking to the employer on the phone. That formality process is part of what researchers do.
- The word "cover" is important because there were more questions that Susan could ask than a job developer could ask.
- We have a full spectrum (in education levels) of clients that are non-English speaking and need to be reeducated. They need to take an entry-level job to work their way up.
- Many immigrants must be reeducated in this country to work in these firms. It is very different for someone from another country to even know the simple tasks. They really need a reconnection in the beginning and usually they get that in the entry-level jobs.
- I think the high-tech firms should consider work experience interns.
- I'm finding that the small factories in particular are looking for special skills, I find that they are willing to try someone with the background and job shadow to learn that special skill.



TRANSCRIPT

*What did you gain from the interviews with human resource people in the different firms?
From the line supervisor?*

First of all I would like to compliment Susan on the great work she did beforehand to prep whoever we went to go see. I particularly went along to UCSF and California Pacific Medical Center and it may have been a relearning but I certainly did gain and validate some stuff that I thought about before, and Susan can back me up, particularly with UCSF. The first time we went to UCSF we didn't have the correct job so to speak. The entry level job that was identified at first was really not an entry level job. It was a lab I assistant and Susan was very gracious and very good in her interviewing process and we got through that information and we quickly asked now what is the real entry level job and which is basically not a dishwasher but a lab helper which washes the tubes and stuff like that. That was at UCSF, and we went back a second time and identified that as the entry level job. Then we went to CPMC and it was very interesting. This is a very large organizations and I've known over the years and I think that one of the good things about this survey is that they were there, for a moment they were captive people in the organization, in the administration were captive to the survey and so we got information. What I learned from that when we went to CPMC was that as most of us know, the best people to deal with are the administrative assistants never mind the CEO's. I've dealt with CEO's but the clerks and admin. assistants really know what's going on. The reality is that some of the larger organizations I've learned about is not a new reality, they have their certain systems just as city and county of San Francisco does, and you have to follow the systems like at CPMC you cannot, as good as my relationships are or will be I cannot pick up the phone and call someone in Human Resources and say I'm sending over a resume of so-and-so, they've got to go over to 2340 Clay Street walk in and that was repeated many times they had to walk in and fill it out and there was no person-to-person referral. The administrative assistants and clerk are the people that make things work in lots of businesses. The turnover is tremendous, but they do promote from within that was pretty clear. So the entry level jobs, I guess it was the lab helper at UCSF and CPMC. Susan and I both learned is that its like 40 hospitals in one that wasn't new to me, so I won't be developing the relationship with the administrative assistant, supervisor or manager, but maybe a hundred. Susan was really good, she really was.

I went out with Susan a few times and I would like just say that Susan had everything well organized, which made the process easy for me as far as walking in, and I didn't have to anything but show up and listen and then ask questions that pertain to how I could better assist the clients as a job developer. We went to Muni on one occasion, the first time we met with the Personnel Administrator. From her I learned the hiring process and it kind of put a face with the name and created a bond to be able to meet the person face to face and just learn more about the hiring procedures and their expectations and plans for the future, and how they are planning on hiring about 300 drivers within next year, and just learning what their plans are for the future helped me. I also learned about their requirements were and what they really looked for in a bus driver. And talking to the supervisor gave me a greater idea as far as maybe 20 years ago the burnout rate for the bus drivers in comparison to today, how a person who goes in as an entry level driver today, and what management is looking for to move that person into a front line supervisor position, what they need, the characteristics they need and the opportunities that are available to bus drivers to move into other positions. It was kind of the same thing, but a different perspective. One was from administrative position and the other from supervisor's position. The supervisor's experience how she moved from a bus driver and moving on to other positions. Things I learned to assist my clients were things like they didn't need an extensive work history to be a bus driver. That wasn't really one of the criteria. They did need a driver's

license, they didn't need a class B or class A they just needed a class C and they provided the training, and they could work part-time and full-time. Other requirements going in, criminal history, wasn't a big barrier, so I've learned that substance abuse is a barrier because they do testing up front. So I learn these things to better assist me with clients that I am working on. Secondly we went to APS, a security company, I learned more about more about that industry. Once again its helped me to put a face along with the name, and at the CalJobs kick off I seen Tina at Cal Jobs and interacted with her. It helped to know her personally and I feel more comfortable in able to communicate with her in person. It was one of the greater learning experiences for me.

We went out to Safeway and talked to the Assistant Manager. I thought the whole process was really helpful and interesting because we have the background where people go in at, like at Safeway everyone starts at a courtesy clerk and they work they way up. So there, the courtesy clerks are the only ones that work forty hours but they don't go up in pay they stay at the same level, \$6.80 but they can go into different departments the second step, bakery, produce etc., but those all part-time people so that I feel the most important thing that came out of this was as we see employment, recruitment, and staffing changing from what it was 18 years ago, no one knew what staffing or outsourcing were, and our clients still tell us they don't want to go to Pro-Serve or Manpower. I don't need a temporary job I need a full-time job, and so many companies now that use these outsourcing companies that rely on somebody else to do the recruiting, hiring and background check takes a lot of work away from them and it also takes away the flexibility. In a lot of the cases you're left with stringent guidelines which is pretty much black and white. However at Safeway, you apply at the individual store. They keep the applicants for 60 days, which is real helpful, but if you don't know the process, you go home and nobody calls you. When the fall comes along and the kids go back to school, they have a high turnover and if you don't call back you probably will not be considered. People that call back will get the first consideration and as far as convictions even if their policy, she may consider it if they talk to her and they are pretty flexible and a very interesting process. I think you can transfer that type of process to other places like Costco, food for less, etc. I'm sure they have they all have their own individual ways but I think it gives us good information across the board and I think, especially in terms of our own job developer techniques I think that it gives us valuable information on how to approach the employers and how to get this type of information that is useful.

Susan and I went to City College for the Teachers Aide. I felt the survey was very well planned and organized and it was targeted to get the pertinent information and it was really good. To me, how it benefited for me as a job developer I was able to establish the contact of the Human Resources manager and also to learn about that particular position and have a clear understanding of the requirements of education, college units, child development what are the expectations of that job, especially be able to communicate with kids and specific skills. I have a better understanding and be able to help the participants and someone head in that directions. I am able to lead the participant to better match the job. I must say it was very well planned survey and the method seems really good. The only thing that I would like to see is that there should more entry-level jobs and other industries. The majority of the jobs were office clerical and I would like to see more production type jobs and being able to see other entry jobs.

I went to Unified School District. They didn't have too many entry level positions. The clerks really knew the majority of the information. It was a bad time because it was the closing of the school year. The Personnel department did not have too much information about the openings and referred us to the individual schools. She really wasn't able to provide us with a whole lot of information, but referred us to the individual principals of the school. It was difficult to contact the teachers because the school year was ending. We just got the school district at a bad time.

Thanks for such a good job Susan has done for DHS. I really appreciate the good job she has done to make it easier to approach the employer. I learned how to ask certain questions and which ones to ask and not to ask. I always had reservations about temp agencies, but since going to Manpower I have learned that they are a very good resource. I know now how to present questions. I learned that temp agencies have other types of jobs for non-English speaking people. I learned that they also pay benefits such as vacation and sick leave to clients. I pass that information to my clients and tell them that temp agencies can be very helpful. I can help them understand the main soft skills and what employers expect and that's one of the main things that employers look for.

Is there other information that we could gain from these interviews that would be useful to you as job developers?

Safeway kept stressing the main quality they look for is customer service. Not only working with people, but different types of people. That type of information is not written in the job description but she kept stressing that attitude is big part of being successful. Being there and being on time was very important to employers.

You get the impression that the written material the employers give you, i.e. job description, does not always give you the information about the soft skills side and that the requirement package is that when they meet with you it always expected.

I think that employers take that for granted to a certain extent and just look at the application and see great skills but once they're on the job those soft skill are no where to be found.

It should be a given, when the City and County started these programs on Welfare reform, they asked what do employers want, it simple, competent and committed people, that's it. All the other stuff is whipped cream. Even the talks about tax credits was whip cream, I just want people to show up.

I found that the interview with the line supervisor was more useful and valuable information because they knew the actual job functions and the details of what is expected. I felt that information was more valuable than the HR interview.

For Susan: Some of the employers want information to be prepared for the interview. Did you send them something on what the interview was about?

Susan: I did send letters to all the employers beforehand to confirm specifically what we are looking for and what to expect during the interview.

When you are going to particular employer, one particular person can be asked about entry level jobs, we should be able to ask about other entry-level jobs within that particular employer.

One other thing when we are Safeway, they told us about the "Happy Questionnaire", a customer service test, is basically what we were talking about that it's a personality profile, and that more and more employers are using this type of survey before working.

What problems did you encounter or what weakness did you see in the current interview structure? How would you address them? Other than the person not reading the mail.

No comments.

An important goal in this interviewing was for the job developers to establish relationships with individuals in SF firms. Did you feel that you were able to establish any relationships with employers? What did you feel that you gained from this?

Yes, I have been in more contact now that I met at both UCSF and CPMC and I've been on their list, particularly. I was surprised that there was only one opening, in that department, so it was nice to get the mailing to see not only the entry level jobs, but also to see what they can see in the long run to be self sufficient. That is what worries me about construction jobs, is getting into a unskilled, construction jobs which is strictly physical and getting into a industrial injury. Looking at long term too.

I didn't participate in the program, but I think it would be good to get a hundred people in the Unified School District, because they have so many different departments. There are so many areas that have entry-level jobs.

One of the products that should be included is that we have the CALJOBS database to put jobs in etc., and the survey information, it is still the same thing, as large as the employers get or however small the employer is they still all wants personal one-on-one contact, so these relationships we build, I have a list, but you still need that personal relationship because they're going to forget you because there are other people out there.

Human relations are very important, because I went to an employer and he told me that he would have something next month, and I followed up and it turned out that he lost my number and he was happy that I called him to follow up so they remember your face so they will always call you.

In regards to relationships and the process, just when I met up with Tina from APS she told me that employees of APS usually go on to become clients and therefore they gave me good information that APS have high regard for their employees because they eventually come back to become clients. When I think about security companies I will remember APS because they value their employees.

What information from the surveys will be most useful? How will it be used?

One of the useful questions in the surveys is how to get to the next step, what do you need to build on getting to that next level.

What do you think you can gain from continuing this project?

Maybe not learn everything, but I think we have to be very careful as to not saturating the employer market with surveys. I'm concerned about that, because I don't want to turn the employer off. Maybe we could do a mail follow-up and whatever we get back we get back, but if switching the focus of survey to medium size companies. I don't think going back to the same firms would serve any great purpose.

I think we should go out to same industries but different companies.

If nothing else to establish the relationship, but I don't know that we can't do that on our own.

Have you been able to share the information with your colleagues? Is there a way to do that or have you already done that?

We have touched on the information, but this is the first time this centered all together.

I personally credit my colleagues with wealth of knowledge they have; unless I came across something unusual about a company that maybe would have not been known, I would have drawn special attention to. Unless there was something special then I would have passed on the information.

There were things that we found out about companies that we did share with our colleagues.

As a job developer we always ask each other about situations and we learn about each other.

We talk to one another about basic problems and try to help one another.

In addition we all got copies of the handbooks and surveys which was very helpful for us as job developers to reference.

I think the survey questions were great, that really advanced our knowledge about asking employers questions and which ones were appropriate to ask. Otherwise I wouldn't know which questions to ask these employers. I was able to give the reasons to why I am asking the questions and able to see the whole project and get the information to tell the clients what to expect.

I think the information that helped was the background information about drug tests, background checks helped us to know that in advance so that we don't waste time with those companies that we know our clients wouldn't even meet those criteria's.

Also the application process information was very important to know, because of the constant changing of the application process.

I just want to say that the learning is reciprocal, the way that you have helped shaped the process and the relationship building is part of allowing us a very different access to the employers. It seems to me that builds on that if you walked in cold to employers, you might not do this academic thing, the formality of it, and to some extent that going with a researcher as

part of research project gives you the permission to ask these types of questions and get them all down in one. I'm wondering if that was one of the advantages to providing some type of cover in the guise of research formality, which you may not get to for several months if you were talking to the employer on the phone. That formality process is a part of what researchers do.

I think it is somewhat valid, the word cover that there were more questions that Susan could ask that a job developer could not ask. You are right there is some cover.

For Susan: *How many firms did you contact?*

Susan: We contacted a total of 35 firms and 16 were completed. Several high tech firms just did not hire entry-level workers.

We also have a full spectrum of clients. We have clients who have immigrants that have higher education and experiences. What I was wondering was from you high tech firms, could immigrants get in if they could cross the language barrier.

Do these type of people need entry-level jobs? Most of them do, if they are on public assistance then they do need something.

Many immigrants must be reeducated in this country to work in these companies. It is very different for someone from another country to know the very simple things. They really do need a reconnection in the beginning and usually they get that in the entry-level jobs.

I think that high tech firms should be asked if they would take work experience intern. And I'm finding out that large corporations are doing using that route. I think that is very good angle to look at.

I'm finding that the small factories are looking for special skills. I don't have anyone with that skill, but how about a person with the background that could possibly shadow the job. How about give someone with the background and give them a chance, and they were open to it because they never even thought about that angle, and he's willing to try that.

Everyone is interested in receiving a final report.

I would like to thank everyone for coming in and including us in the project and Pam David who suggested this match and Gib who pulled this together.

APPLAUDE, APPLAUDE, APPLAUDE.

And I would also like to thank you all for hanging in there for continuing to help shape the future of this program.

